

**Application
for
United States Letters Patent**

To all whom it may concern:

*Be it known that, we,
Wyatt Paul, Pascual Perez, Eric Huttner, and Andreas Stefan Betzner
have invented certain new and useful improvements in*

PROTEIN COMPLEMENTATION IN TRANSGENIC PLANTS

of which the following is a full, clear and exact description.

Ins a. **PROTEIN COMPLEMENTATION IN TRANSGENIC PLANTS**

This invention relates to pairs of parent plants for producing hybrid seeds and to methods for producing plants with a desired phenotype. The desired phenotype is an active enzyme, a regulatory protein or a protein which affects the functionality and/or viability and/or structural integrity of a cell. Preferably, the desired phenotype is substantially absent from the parent plants/lines. In particular, the invention relates to parent plants and methods involving plant lines for producing male-sterile plants and seeds.

The present invention describes a protein complementation system, with a variety of different applications. The system can be explained and exemplified with reference to obtaining male-sterile plants and embryoless seeds although it is not limited to these applications.

The use of dominant Artificial Male Sterility (AMS) in plants is described in WO95/20668. This document describes a binary system using two genes which together (but not in isolation) cause male sterility. The genes are brought together by crossing plants, each parent being homozygous for the gene, which generates a homogenous population of male sterile plants. WO95/20668 describes several ways to implement the gene binary system, including the following:

- i. a system based on activation of transcription: a transcriptionally inactive AMS gene is activated upon crossing by provision of the relevant transcription factor;

- ii. a system based on activation of splicing: an AMS gene inactivated by the presence of an intron is activated upon crossing by provision of the relevant maturase;
- iii. a system based on the suppression of a stop codon during translation: an AMS gene inactivated by introducing an artificial stop codon in the ORF, is activated upon crossing by provision of an artificial stop suppressor tRNA for the introduced stop codon.
- iv. a system based on sequence-specific gene inactivation: One parent contains a modified male fertility gene and a transgene which inactivates only the unmodified male fertility gene. The other parent contains a transgene which inactivates only the modified male fertility gene. In the hybrid both the modified and unmodified male fertility genes are inactivated causing male sterility.
- v. a system based on preventing restoration of male fertility by a restorer gene: the first parent contains the AMS gene and the restorer gene, and the second parent contains a gene inhibiting the action of the restorer gene.

However, the binary systems described above have so far proved complex to implement and have encountered a variety of difficulties.

For example, it has been found that the use of a suppressor tRNA (described in Betzner et al. 1996,

Abstract of the 14th International Congress of Plant
Reproduction, Lorne, Australia) can have deleterious
consequences for some plant species. While this does
not preclude its use, it does make the screening of
5 suitable transgenic plants more labour intensive than
desirable. Another example is the leakiness of the T7
promoter (described in EP-A-0589841). Some plants
transformed with a T7 promoter driving Barnase were
sterile in the absence of the T7 RNA polymerase. Again,
10 this does not preclude use of the system but it does
make it difficult to identify suitable transgenic
plants. Furthermore, in certain plants the gene binary
system is sub-optimal since not all of the required
genetic elements are fully characterised.

15 Two areas of prior art have been explored which have
resulted in a phenotype conferred to a plant by the
combination of two proteins.

20 In 1989, Hiatt and coworkers (Nature, vol. 342, p. 76-
78) described the production of a functional antibody in
tobacco by crossing tobacco plants expressing a gamma
immunoglobulin gene and a kappa immunoglobulin gene.

25 Problems were, however, encountered with this system.
Since the light and heavy chains of an antibody interact
through disulfide bridges, the bridges were unable to
form in the reducing environment present in the
cytoplasm. Assembly of a functional antibody in plants
30 thus requires that both chains are targeted to the
endoplasmic reticulum then secreted to the apoplast (the
space between cells). The production of antibodies in
plants has thus been limited to the production of
secreted antibodies or the production of single chain

antibodies.

In 1992 Lloyd et al. (Science, vol. 258, p. 1773-1775) described the transfer in Arabidopsis and tobacco of two maize genes coding for the transcription factors R and C1. Ectopic expression of these genes separately in heterologous plants has some effect on the transcription of endogenous genes. In particular the genes have some effect in isolation, and this may preclude their use for applied purposes. Co-expression of the two genes had more dramatic qualitative and quantitative effects, than expression of either gene alone. However, these genes have properties severely limiting their usefulness and their general inapplication is described in the paper.

It has been shown that the Arabidopsis transcription factors Apetala3 and Pistillata can be ectopically co-expressed, and jointly in concert cause a new phenotype in the Arabidopsis flower (Krizek and Meyerowitz, 1996, Development, vol. 122, p. 11-22). The limitations described above for the R/C1 proteins also apply in this case.

The present invention describes a protein complementation system which overcomes many of the problems and difficulties associated with known gene binary systems. The protein complementation system according to this invention is based on the expression of two or more gene sequences in a single plant, which polypeptides/proteins, associate, interact or come together to form an active enzyme, a regulatory protein or a protein which affects the functionality and/or viability and/or the structural integrity of a cell. Hereinafter, in this text all references to a protein

which affects the structural integrity of a cell also describes a protein which may, in addition, or alternatively, affect the functionality and/or viability of a cell. Some polypeptides/proteins may fall in more than one of these categories. None of the individual gene sequences present in a given plant lead to a significant phenotypic effect in these plants.

The present invention describes the creation of a plant which has a desired phenotype through expression of an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell (eg. a membrane destabilizing protein). The plant may be obtained by crossing a pair of parent plants a and b.

Plant a contains one or more gene sequences which encode a polypeptide(s) or protein(s) (A) with little or no activity so that the desired phenotype is not significantly (or substantially) caused by expression of the one or more genes in plant a alone. Plant b also contains one or more gene sequences which encode a polypeptide(s) or protein(s) (B) also, with little or no activity so that the desired phenotype is not significantly (or substantially) caused by expression of the one or more genes in plant b alone. When plants a and b are crossed, the resulting hybrid expresses both polypeptides and/or proteins A and B. These two polypeptides/proteins associate, interact or come together to form an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell, with the result that the daughter plant displays the desired phenotype. NB: From hereon, when discussing the polypeptides/proteins A or B they will be referred to only as 'polypeptides' for the sake of convenience.

This protein complementation binary system is simpler than the previously described binary systems since there is no need for interaction between genes, no required modification of the expression of genes and no
5 modification of the level of expressed polypeptides in the daughter plant compared to the parent plants.

The present invention is described with reference to the Figures which are:

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FIGURE 1A; Barnase coding sequence;

FIGURE 1B; Intergenic sequence;

FIGURE 1C; Barstar coding sequence;

15 FIGURE 1D; Translational fusion of ORF Peptide A**/(Gly4 ser)3 Linker peptide / GUS;

FIGURE 1E; Nucleotide sequence of Translational fusion of Ubiquitin genomic sequence and ORF Peptide A***;

FIGURE 1F; Nucleotide sequence of Translational fusion of Ubiquitin genomic sequence and ORF peptide B***

20 FIGURE 1G; DNA sequence of IPCR (inverse polymerase chain reaction) primers (example 1)

FIGURE 2; Schematic illustration of pepA* and pepB* construction by Inverse PCR (IPCR)

FIGURE 3A; In vitro construction from synthetic

25 oligonucleotides of S-peptide, S(+5)-protein and S-protein;

FIGURE 3B; In vitro construction from synthetic oligonucleotides of the sequence encoding the S-peptide and the (Gly4-Ser)3 linker;

30 FIGURE 4A; protein and DNA sequences of S-peptide and S-peptide with (Gly4-Ser)3 linker;

FIGURE 4B; protein and DNA sequences of S(+5)-protein and S-protein.

FIGURE 4C(i); PCR amplification product encoding partial

AOX3 targeting signal;

(ii); ORF encoding AOX3 targeting sequence
(underlined) and S-peptide

(iii); ORF encoding AOX3 targeting sequence
5 (underlined) and S-peptide/(Gly4 Ser)3/GUS

(iv); ORF encoding AOX3 targeting sequence
(underlined) and S-protein

(v); translational fusion of Ubiquitin genomic
sequence and ORF of S-protein;

10 FIGURE 4D; nucleotide sequence of IPCR primers (example
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FIGURE 5; production scheme for embryoless maize grains.

15 Embryoless seeds harvested from female rows only = 100%
of embryoless maize seeds

or

20 Seeds harvested from all the field plants =
approximately 80% of embryoless maize seeds:

note that if this sort of seeds harvesting is suited a
random sowing with 10% of male plants and 90% of female
plants is desirable and possible.

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Legend

male parent A
expressing pepA* in embryos
30 Genotype: emb-pepA*/emb-pepA*
or
emb-pepA* linked to Herbicide
resistance/emb-pepA* linked to
herbicide resistance

female parent B
expressing pepB* in embryos only
Genotype: emb-pep*/emb-pepB* in a
5 male sterile cytoplasmic environment
or
emb-pepB*/emb-pepB*
Artificial Male Sterility linked to
Herbicide Resistance/+

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According to a first aspect of the invention there is provided a pair of parent plants for producing seeds comprising:

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- (i) a first parent plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide A; and
- (ii) a second parent plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide B;

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wherein the polypeptides A, B, when expressed separately in different plants, do not form an active enzyme a regulatory protein or other protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell but when expressed in the same plant do form an active enzyme, regulatory

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protein or other protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell. Presence of the active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell in a single plant, is the desired phenotype.

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The present invention includes the scenario of inter-

extra-genic repression/complementation/suppression; that is, where a mutation in one subunit of a multi-subunit complex can complement a mutation in another sub-unit in order to restore the active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein affecting the structural integrity of the cell. In such a scenario, the polypeptide(s)/protein(s) A and B may be the same in the two parent plants, with the exception of the different mutations. Examples include the *E.coli* regulatory proteins as described by Tokishita S.I., and Mizuno T., 1994, *Mol. Microbiol. (UK)*, 13/3, 435-444 and the GroES and GroEL proteins of *E.coli* as described by Zeilstra-Ryalls J., et al., 1994, *J. Bacteriol. (US)*, 176, (21), 6558-65.

15 In the present invention, the pair of parent plants can be described as a pair of complementary plants for producing hybrid seeds or even a pair of complementary transgenic plants for producing transgenic hybrid seeds.

20 It is most likely that at least one of the pair of parent plants is transgenic. When used herein the term 'transgenic' refers not only to genetic material from another species but to genetically manipulated DNA from the same plant or species. The genetic manipulation of the plant may be by a microbiological process such as *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* (Horsch R.B., Fry J.E., Hoffman N.L., Eichholtz D., Rogers S.G., Fraley R.T., (1985), *Science*, 227 : 1229-1231)). Alternative manipulations include biolistic transformation, a technique also well known in the art, the use of *Agrobacterium rhizogenes*, particle gun, electroporation polyethylene glycol or silica fibers.

The present invention may be applied to any plant, in

particular, maize, wheat, tomato, oilseed rape, barley, sunflower, linseed, peas, beans, melon, pepper, squash, cucumber and egg plant (aubergine) and other broad acre plants.

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Use of the term "one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide...." refers to any number of stretches of genetic material (preferably DNA) which can encode one or more peptides/polypeptides/proteins. Thus

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"polypeptides" A or B can actually comprise more than one amino acid sequence which may or may not be linked or associated. There is no restriction on the location in the parent plant genome of the one or more gene sequences. Where more than one gene sequence is

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present, encoding for more than one peptide/polypeptide/protein, the relationship between the encoded sequences in each parent plant is only relevant to the extent that the parent plant does not display the desired phenotype (to any significant

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level). When the one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide A are expressed in the same plant as the one or more gene sequences encoding polypeptide B, then the result, according to the invention is the phenotype of an active enzyme, a regulatory protein or a protein

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which affects the structural integrity of a cell. Proteins which affect the structural integrity of a cell include proteins that destabilise or create holes or ion channels in cellular membranes.

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A particular application of the present invention is the production of male-sterile plants. Accordingly, the polypeptides A, B when expressed in the same plant may cause male-sterility by ablation of the tapetum. An alternative application, also of the first aspect of the

invention is the expression of polypeptides A, B in the same plant which form an active enzyme, a regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell, which, through cell ablation in a specific tissue results in a different phenotype, as described below.

In addition to causing male-sterility, potent hydrolases like Barnase can be used for other applications where cell ablation is needed, for example to remove an unneeded organ from a hybrid crop. This may contribute to reducing downstream processing costs. One example is the production of embryoless seeds, which is now described as follows: In the production of flour (from wheat) or semolinas (from maize or wheat) or corn flakes (from maize) or for other uses, it would be desirable to have seeds with no embryo. The use of embryo specific promoters in the first aspect of the invention above would enable ablation of embryos in seeds, in a cross dependent manner. That is, in the seeds produced by the plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding polypeptide A, pollinated with pollen from a plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding polypeptide B. Self pollination of plant a has to be prevented, for example by making plant a male-sterile. A possible production scheme for valuable embryoless maize grains would be the following: generate a plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding polypeptide A (plant a) and a plant containing one or more gene sequences encoding polypeptide B (plant b), designed so that combination of polypeptide A and polypeptide B in one seed results in embryo ablation. Figure 5 shows a production scheme for embryoless maize grains according to the invention.

The biochemical composition of plants can also be manipulated according to the first aspect of the invention, for example by fatty acid biosynthetic enzymes. Where the presence of an unusual but valuable fatty acid in the plant has a deleterious effect on the plant, it would be useful to be able to produce seeds with the unusual (fatty acid) oil through a cross between two lines having a normal (or quasi normal) oil composition (to the extent that each parent line is not deleteriously effected). Splitting the enzyme responsible for the valuable fatty acid biosynthesis in two or more inactive parts, provides a practical way of producing the seeds with the valuable oil. Where the enzyme responsible for the desired trait is heteromultimeric, separating the genes from the various monomers in the two parent plants is a simple way to implement the invention. More generally, this invention can be used to obtain hybrid seeds or hybrid plants with a particular phenotype which neither parent has. In particular, this invention can be used to create hybrid plants, resistant to a herbicide, via the crossing of two parent plants. Each of the parent plants expresses one or more non-functional parts of an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which effects the structural integrity of a cell, which is directly or indirectly responsible for herbicide resistance. As the one or more genes in each parent plant responsible for the trait will segregate independently, this will result in the gametes of such hybrid plants (especially pollen grains) giving rise to a lower transfer of the herbicide resistance trait to relatives or to weeds (in comparison with a classical single gene). If the hybrid seed is the harvested desirable product, expression of the

desired trait would be restricted to the seed endosperm and embryo since these tissues are genetically hybrids.

5 The active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell is preferably localised to a tissue specific (ie. present only in a selected tissue). This requires that one or both of the gene sequences encoding the polypeptides A, B are operatively linked to an appropriately stimulated
10 promoter, eg. a tissue specific promoter so as to produce the desired phenotype. Where only one of the polypeptides is limited to expression in a selected tissue, the other polypeptide requires constitutive expression or at least an expression pattern which
15 overlaps with that of the first polypeptide.

As described above, the expression may be seed or embryo specific and promoters for such tissue specificity are well known in the art. In the case of male-sterility,
20 the promoter is preferably tapetum specific. Such promoters known in the art include the TA29 promoter (EP-A-0344029), the A9 promoter (Paul et al 1992, Plant Molecular Biology, vol. 19, p. 611-622) and the promoters described in WO95/29247. In order for
25 heterozygous plants to have the desired phenotype, promoters must be active at the sporophytic level.

The choice of gene sequence for producing an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the
30 structural integrity of a cell depends, of course, on the desired phenotype. Any gene sequence encoding an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell can be used provided that the protein activity can result from the

association, interaction or combination of two or more polypeptides encoded by two or more gene sequences and that their activity can result in the desired phenotype.

Immediately obvious proteins which can be suitable are those which are naturally encoded by two or more polypeptides and which self-assemble to form the final protein structure. The individual polypeptide units (subunits) should have no significant activity in vivo.

10 Suitable proteins for use according to the invention include natural heterodimeric proteins such as the C1-R maize proteins and the *Apetala3-Pistillata* (Ap3-Pi) *Arabidopsis thaliana* proteins. When present in the tapetum, the dimer protein Ap3-Pi can activate genes
15 responsive to this transcription factor (which would normally be inactive because this transcription factor is normally absent from, or present at a low level in, the tapetum). The activated gene is preferably, but not necessarily, endogenous to the plant of interest. For
20 example, expressing the dimer Ap3-Pi in the tapetum of maize will activate transcription of genes normally involved in flower development in other floral organs, and will prevent normal pollen maturation. The level of sterility of such a system can be improved by also
25 engineering into the daughter plant a gene sequence which is affected by the produced active enzyme or regulatory protein.

One example is the introduction into one of the parent
30 lines of a gene sequence from Barnase or PR-Glucanase under the control of the *Apetala3* promoter (p*Apetala3*). The *Apetala3* promoter is responsive to the Ap3-Pi dimer and thus expression of the Barnase or PR-Glucanase protein occurs in the daughter plant. Such a system

provides for the enhancement of plant male-sterility with the additional advantage of being under a strict control mechanism (via the pApetala3). Thus, the cause of the desired phenotype may be direct, ie. a direct result of the active enzyme, regulation protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell, or may be indirect, ie. acting via an intermediate factor. Other transcription factors, for use in the invention, exist already as, or can be engineered to, a heterodimeric form, for example using the dimerisation domains described below. These include artificial transcription factors made by the association of a DNA binding domain and an activation domain of different origins.

An alternative use of the Apetala3-Pistillata system, is the complementation of mutations in sub-units of the proteins. For example, one parent plant may express both proteins but with a mutation in one or the other so that the plant does not have the active dimer. The other parent plant may also express both proteins, in this case, a mutation being in the other protein. The second parent plant would not express the active dimer. A cross between the two parent plants would result in expression of genes to produce an active dimer.

Ectopic expression of the subunits for these transcription factors can be used to modulate expression of their target gene and cause male sterility or other traits (including pleiotropic effects) in a cross-dependent manner.

It is also possible to use, according to the first aspect of the invention proteins which have to be

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In order to implement a system, according to the present invention, involving artificially split proteins, it may be necessary to design genetic constructs in order to express the polypeptides therefrom. In order to design the genetic constructs whose products will associate to form the active enzyme some modifications may be required. For example, a methionine codon can be added in front of the ORF encoding the second half of the active enzyme and a stop codon can be added after the ORF encoding the first half of the active enzyme. If the polypeptides are expressed as the C terminal part of a translational fusion to another protein or to a protein targeting sequence, then a start codon may be absent from the ORF of polypeptide A and/or polypeptide B, whereas a stop codon is still needed to terminate the ORF of polypeptide A and polypeptide B, respectively. If polypeptide A or B is expressed as the N-terminal part of a translational fusion to another protein, then the ORF of polypeptide A or B will start with a methionine codon whereas the termination codon is provided by the ORF of the other protein to which it is fused. Such genetic construct design is commonplace and well known to the person skilled in the art.

The invention may also be practised by expressing two portions of two different enzymes that together give a different activity than either of the intact parent proteins.

Preferably, both parent plants are homozygous with respect to the gene sequences encoding polypeptide A or polypeptide B. Such genotypes ensure that all offspring will express the active enzyme, regulatory protein or

protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell.

5 If one or more of the polypeptides (A or B) is/are small
and there are doubts that any of them will be stable in
a cell, it is possible to use well-known systems wherein
the small polypeptide is fused in frame to a "carrier
protein" which protects it from being degraded or
increases its proteolytic stability, but retains its
10 freedom to interact with the other polypeptide(s) to
form the active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein
which affects the structural integrity of a cell.

15 The carrier protein can be chosen so that the
polypeptides A or B are not affected by the fusion. One
suitable carrier protein is the β -Glucuronidase (GUS)
protein, which tolerates addition to its NH₂ end, and is
a good reporter gene in plants. In this case, one can
use the level of GUS activity to evaluate the expression
20 level of the fused small polypeptide. This can be
useful for screening primary transformants. Another
suitable carrier protein is ubiquitin (Hondred and
Vierstra, 1992, Curr. Opin. Biotechnol. 3, 147-151;
Vierstra, 1996, Plant Mol. Biol., 32, 275-302). When
25 fused in frame to the carboxy-terminus of ubiquitin,
proteins accumulate significantly in the plant
cytoplasm. In addition artificial ubiquitin protein
fusions resemble natural ubiquitin extension proteins,
e.g. UBQ1 of *Arabidopsis thaliana* (Callis et al., 1990,
30 J. Biol. Chem., 265, 12486-12493), in that they are
cleaved precisely at the C-terminus of ubiquitin (after
Gly 76 by specific endogenous proteases. This process
releases the "attached" protein or peptide moiety from

the fusion protein and thus permits polypeptide A and B to assemble into a functional enzyme or protein. Also, for the purpose of protecting small proteins from cytoplasmic proteolysis, translational products may be
5 enlarged by fusing them to protein targeting signals, e.g. the C-terminus (Whelan and Glaser, 1997, Plant Mol. Biol. 33, 771-781) and be directed to specific locations in the cell such as to mitochondria. A suitable signal, for example, is the one found in the AOX3 protein of
10 soybean (Finnegan and Day, Plant Physiol., 1997, 114, pp 155) which would add 50 amino acids to polypeptide A and B, respectively. Import associated proteolytic processing will remove the targeting signal by cleavage after Met50 thereby releasing the free polypeptides A
15 and B into the mitochondria where they combine to disrupt mitochondrial function and thus to compromise cell viability.

In some cases, when expressed in two or more portions,
20 the polypeptides may not spontaneously associate, assemble, interact or come together *in vivo* to reform an active protein, or regulatory enzyme or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell. In other cases the association of the polypeptides may be weak so
25 that little active reconstituted protein is formed. To circumvent these problems, each protein portion may be linked to a protein dimerisation domain, thus enabling the portions to be brought together *in vivo*. Such protein dimerisation domains are found in many proteins
30 that naturally form dimers or multimers and the linking technique is well known in the art.

For example, the human cysteine-rich protein LIM double zinc finger motif has been fused to the Gal4 and VP16

proteins. In contrast to the unmodified Gal4 and Vp16 proteins the LIM-Gal4 and LIM-VP16 associate in vitro and in vivo (in NIH 3T3 mammalian cells) forming an active transcription factor (Feuerstein et al., 1994, Proc.Natl.Acad.Sci. U.S.A. 91, 10655-10659). The LIM motif is found in many organisms. For example, a sunflower pollen specific protein with a LIM domain has been identified (Batz et al., 1996, Plant Physiology (Supplement III, -59). Other protein dimerisation domains exist such as the leucine zipper (Turner, R. and Tijian R., 1989 Science, 243, 1689-1694), the helix-loop-helix (Murre et al., 1989, Cell, 56, 777-783), the ankyrin Blank et al., 1993, Trends in Biochemical Sciences, 17, 135-140) and the PAS (Huang et al., 1993, Nature, 364, 259-262) domains.

One may also wish to ensure that the genes encoding polypeptides A or B are inserted in the genomes of parents a and b at an identical position (or at tightly linked positions) so that their chance of co-segregation in the transgenic hybrid is low. This can be advantageous, for example in the production of hybrid seed since the two genes that are used to create the male-sterile parent plant will subsequently segregate. Thus, F1 hybrid progeny are 100% male fertile since no hybrid plant can inherit both components of the male-sterility system.

The gene sequences carried by the parent plants a and b which encode part of the active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell may be from a different organism. The gene sequences do not have to be plant derived and include genes from microbial or other sources. For

example, the gene sequences may be Arabidopsis endogenous sequences in maize or tomato parent plants. Also, the gene sequences may be those which, in combination with a tissue specific promoter, are
5 expressed in a tissue in which the gene sequences are not normally expressed.

According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a method for producing a plant having a desired
10 phenotype of an active enzyme, a regulatory protein or a protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell, the method comprising crossing a first plant line with a second plant line wherein the first line contains one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide A
15 which is part of an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell but which line does not have the phenotype and wherein the second line contains one or more gene sequences encoding a polypeptide B which is complementary to the
20 polypeptide or protein A but which line does not have the desired phenotype. Here, the term "complementary" means that when expressed in the same plant the polypeptides A and B associate, interact or come together to form the phenotype of an active enzyme, a
25 regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of a cell.

Such a method may incorporate one or more of the features described above for the first aspect of the
30 invention and the invention contemplates the application of these aspects according to the second aspect of the invention.

According to a third aspect of the invention there is

provided a seed or plant obtainable from a pair of plants according to the first aspect of the invention or by a method according to the second aspect of the invention.

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According to a fourth aspect of the invention there is provided a seed or plant having a phenotype of an active enzyme, regulatory protein or protein which affects the structural integrity of the cell, which is caused by the combined action of two or more transgenes, the transgenes not being present on the same copy of a chromosome. The preferred embodiments of the first, second and third aspects of the invention also apply to the fourth aspect. This means that the two or more transgenes are either on different chromosomes, or on different copies of the same chromosome, ie. the plant is made by a cross.

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The invention will now be described by the following non-limiting Examples:

EXAMPLE 1

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Splitting the Barnase Gene into Two Components (Figure 1)

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The results of Sancho and Ferscht, 1992; J.Mol.Biol., 224, 741-747 show that Barnase activity can be obtained by combining a peptide A containing amino acids 1 to 36 of the mature Barnase protein and peptide B containing amino acids 37 to 110 of the mature Barnase protein. The allele of Barnase which is described in Sancho and Ferscht is a mutant which has a methionine at position 36, allowing cyanogen bromide to cleave between 36 and

37 and produce the 2 peptides. The following genetic constructs, to express the peptides, were prepared:

Peptide A:

i. A Barnase gene with a methionine codon (amino acid position -1) added before codon 1 of the mature Barnase sequence so that translation can take place as described in Paul et al, 1992, Plant Mol.Biol., 19, 611-622.

ii. An ORF coding for a peptide called A*, containing a methionine followed by amino acids 1 to 35 of mature Barnase protein followed by an Ochre stop codon.

iii. A gene made of ORF A* under control of the A9 promoter by using IPCR on our plasmid p3079, which contains the AMS gene pA9-Barnase (as in i. above) - Barstar - CaMV 3' region. (See Figure 2).

Plasmid p3079 was constructed by cloning a fragment containing the ORFs for Barnase-Barstar, obtained by PCR from pWP127 (Paul et al, 1992, supra), in our plasmid p1415, which is a derivative of pWP91 (WO-A-9211379) where the EcoRV restriction site has been converted to HindIII. IPCR was then performed on p3079 using primers B3 and B4 (see Figures 1 and 2) designed so that the sequence between codon 36 of Barnase and stop codon of Barstar is not part of the amplified product. The IPCR amplified sequence was then circularised by ligation and the resulting plasmid was introduced into *E. coli*. The plasmid was then prepared, cut with EcoRI and the fragment containing the ORF A* was cloned in the EcoRI sites of p1415, so that ORF A* would be under the

control of the A9 promoter from a sequence not treated by PCR. The resulting plasmid p2022 contains ORF A* in the A9 expression cassette.

- 5 iv. An ORF coding for a peptide called A**, comprised of a start methionine codon followed by amino acids 1 to 36 of the mutant Barnase (Sancho and Ferscht, 1992, supra) but lacking a stop codon.
- 10 This was obtained by PCR on template p2022 with primers B5 (retaining the XbaI site at the 5' end) and B6 generating a blunt 3' end.
- 15 v. A gene made of the translational fusion of ORF A** and the ORF of (Gly4 Ser) β /GUS under the control of the A9 promoter, the product of which shows peptide A fused in frame to the N-terminus of (Gly4 Ser) β /GUS (Figure 1D).
- 20 This was obtained by replacing the S-peptide ORF in plasmid p2028 (see example 3) with the ORF of plasmid A** (iv). For ORF replacement an IPCR was performed on plasmid p2028 using primers B7 (retaining the Xba site at the 5' end) and B8 (generating a blunt 3' end) to
- 25 delete the region encoding the S-peptide from the S-peptide-GUS translational fusion. After digest with XbaI, the PCR fragment encoding peptide A** (iv) was inserted XbaI/blunt into the acceptor DNA generated by IPCR.
- 30 vi. An ORF coding for peptide A***, essentially identical to peptide A**(iv) but lacking a methionine start codon and containing an amber stop codon.

This was obtained by PCR on template p2022 using primers B9 (producing a blunt 5' end) and B10 (introducing a BamHI site at the 3' end). The 3' end of the PCR product was digested with BamHI for construction of the ubiquitin-peptide A*** translational fusion (below).

vii. A gene made of the translational fusion of genomic DNA encoding ubiquitin and the ORF A*** under the control of the A9 promoter, the product of which shows peptide A*** fused in frame to the C terminus of ubiquitin (Figure 1E).

The genomic DNA encoding ubiquitin was obtained by PCR from chromosomal DNA of *Arabidopsis thaliana*. The PCR primers Ubq16F and Ubq1R were designed to amplify the ubiquitin encoding sequence from the extension protein gene UBQ1, first described by Callis et al. (1990, supra). Restriction sites for XbaI (at 5' end) and BamHI (at 3' end), introduced during thermocycling, were used to clone the PCR fragment under the control of the A9 promoter of p1415 digested with XbaI and BamHI to yield plasmid p3245. IPCR was then performed on p3245 using primers UBQ1a and UBQ1b to generate a blunt acceptor end immediately after the ubiquitin codon Gly 76 and at the 3' end to reconstitute the BamHI restriction site for cloning. After BamHI digest this construct served as acceptor for the PCR fragment encoding peptide A*** (vi).

30 Peptide B:

i. An ORF coding for a peptide called B* which starts with a methionine codon followed by codons 37 to 110 of the mature Barnase sequence. In effect this transfers the methionine 36 of the mutant Barnase gene (Sancho and

Ferscht, 1992, supra) from peptide A to peptide B, yielding peptides A* and B*.

- ii. Gene for ORF B* containing the ATG (amino acid position -1) of Barnase (in p3079) fused to codon 37 of Barnase, under control of the A9 promoter, by deleting (by IPCR with suitable primers) (see below) codons 1 to 36 of the mature Barnase sequence.
- 10 This was done by performing on p3079 an IPCR reaction using primers B1 and B2, (Figures 1 and 2) designed so that the sequence between codon 2 and codon 36 of Barnase is not part of the amplified product (see Figure 2). The IPCR product is treated as described above for
- 15 ORF A*, and cloned under control of the A9 promoter in p1415. The resulting plasmid p2023 contains ORF B* - Barstar in the A9 expression cassette.
- iii. An ORF encoding peptide B*** which differs from B* (i) in that it lacks the start methionine.
- 20 iv. A gene made of the translational fusion of genomic DNA encoding ubiquitin and the ORF B*** under the control of the A9 promoter, the product of which shows peptide B*** fused in frame to the C-terminus of ubiquitin (Figure 1F).
- 25

IPCR as performed on plasmid p2023 (above) with primers B11 and B12, retaining the XbaI site at the 5' end of B* but removing the ATG start and leaving a blunt 3' end.

30 After digest with XbaI, the IPCR product served as an acceptor for the ubiquitin encoding DNA. The latter sequence was obtained by PCR from plasmid p3245 (above) with primers Ubq16F and Ubq1b retaining an XbaI site at

5 In Figure 1G: The nucleotide sequences of primers are listed which were used for PCR and IPCR, respectively.

Also In Fig. 2:-
lane 1:
20 A schematic (not to scale) representation is shown of
plasmid p3079. The different structural parts of the
coding regions are highlighted. ATG and TAA represent
the start and stop codon of barnase and barstar,
respectively. The relative positions of codons 35, 36
25 and 37 of the mature Barnase protein are indicated.

lane 3:
IPCR with primers B3 and B4 deleted the sequence

downstream of the barnase codon 35 as indicated. Intramolecular ligation of the linear deletion plasmid then fused the barnase codon 35 to the barstar stop codon yielding the pepA*-sequence.

5

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EXAMPLE 2

Plant Transformation with the Genetic Constructs in Example 1

5

Genes pA9-A* and pA9-B* expressing a polypeptide A and a polypeptide B from the A9 promoter (WO92/11379) were cloned into derivatives of the plant transformation vector pBin19 Beven et al., 1984, Nucl. Ac. Res. 12, 8711 Frish et al., 1995 Plant Mol. Biol., 27, 405-409 and Arabidopsis plants containing pA9-polypeptide A, or pA9-polypeptide B, or both genes, were obtained. Plants containing both genes were male sterile, whereas plants containing one gene were unaffected by the transgene.

10

15 Plants with one gene were allowed to self, their progeny was harvested, and was analysed to identify homozygous and heterozygous T1 plants. T1 plants with pA9-polypeptide A were crossed with T1 plants with pA9-polypeptide B. The hybrid seeds obtained displayed the

20 predicted phenotype: wild type if containing one gene only, and male sterile when containing the two genes.

Genes are introduced into maize and into tomato by biolistic or Agrobacterium-mediated transformation, and

25 plants are regenerated and assessed for male fertility in a similar way. (Mornish et al., 1990 Biol/Technology 8, 833-839 and Fillatj et al., 1987 Bio/Technology 5, 726-7390.

30 EXAMPLE 3

Splitting an RNaseA gene into two components
(Figures 3 and 4)

From the work of Richards and Vithayathil (1959 *supra*), we know that the enzyme RNaseA can be cleaved (by the protease subtilisin) to generate two polypeptides: the S-peptide contains amino acids 1 to 20 of RNaseA, and the S-protein contains amino acids 21 to 124 of RNaseA.

When combined, the S-peptide and the S-protein associate, and reconstitute an active enzyme. The last 5 amino acids of the S-peptide are not needed for reconstituting RNaseA: a smaller S-peptide made of amino acids 1 to 15 is sufficient. Genes which express the S-peptide and the S-protein under control of the A9 promoter were used to develop a system according to the invention.

The starting material was a synthetic gene coding for bovine pancreatic RNaseA (Vasanthan and Filpula, 1989, Gene 76 53-60). A gene coding for the ORF of RNaseA was made using synthetic oligonucleotides (see Figures 3A and 3B). The nucleotide sequence of the gene was designed to be compatible with maize codon usage, according to Fennoy and Bailey-Serres, 1993 Nuc. Acids Res., 21, 5294-5300. PCR with suitable primers was used to amplify from the full length ORF. The following ORFs were built:

S-peptide:

i. An ORF for the S-peptide containing a methionine translation initiation codon followed by codons 1 to 15 of the mature RNaseA sequence (see Figures 4A and 4B) and terminated by an Ochre stop codon.

ii. An ORF made of a methionine translation initiation codon followed by codons 1 to 15 of the mature RNaseA sequence, followed by a linker sequence encoding (Gly4-

Ser)3 (see Figures 4A and 4B). This gene was designed so that it can be fused in frame to the ORF of the GUS protein by cloning in the BamHI site of plasmid p2027 which contains the GUS-gene from pBI101.3 (Jefferson, 5 1987 Plant Mol.Biol.Reporter, 5 387-405).

iii. A translational fusion comprising the ORF of the mitochondrial protein targeting sequence of AOX3 protein from soybean (Finnegan and Day, 1997, Plant Physiol. 10 114, pp455) and the ORF of S-peptide as described in (i) but lacking the methionine translation initiation codon (Figure 4C). The gene product of said translational fusion shows the S-peptide fused to the C-terminal end of the targeting sequence.

15 iv. A translational fusion comprising the ORF of the mitochondrial protein targeting sequence of AOX3 protein (supra) and the ORF of the S-peptide-GUS fusion as described in (ii) but lacking the methionine 20 translational initiation codon (Figure 4C). The gene product of said translational fusion shows that the S-peptide-GUS protein fused to the C-terminal end of the targeting sequence.

25 S-protein:

i. An ORF for the "S-protein +5", which contains a methionine translation initiation codon followed by codons 16 to 124 of mature RNaseA sequence and is terminated by an Ochre codon.

30

ii. An ORF for the S-protein which contains a methionine translation initiation codon followed by codons 21 to 124 of mature RNaseA sequence and is terminated by an Ochre codon.

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DJF

5 iii. A translational fusion comprising the ORF of the mitochondrial protein targeting sequence of AOX3 protein (supra) and the ORF of the S-protein as described in (ii) but lacking the methionine translational initiation codon (Figure 4C). The gene product of said translational fusion shows the S-protein fused to the C-terminal end of ubiquitin.

10 iv. A translational fusion comprising genomic DNA encoding ubiquitin and the ORF of the S-protein as described in (ii) but lacking the methionine translational initiation codon (Figure 4C). The gene product of said translational fusion shows the S-protein
15 fused to the C-terminus of ubiquitin.

Genes under control of the A9 promoter were then built and introduced into plants as in Example 2.

20 In Fig. 3A: The sequences encoding the S-peptide, the S(+5)-protein and the S-protein were constructed by first aligning sense oligonucleotides RN-I to RN-VII (lanes 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 16) along complementary guide oligonucleotides RN-1 to RN-6 (lanes 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 25 14) and then selectively ligating the correctly aligned sense oligonucleotides using Taq-DNA-Ligase.

The ligation resulted in a continuous single DNA strand (sense) which was subsequently amplified by Vent DNA
30 polymerase (25 PCR cycles) using one of two primer pairs as follows: (i) Primers RN-a (lane 1) and RN-b (lane 15) amplified the full ligation product. The PCR product was gel purified and cleaved with restriction enzymes BamHI (underlined, lanes 1 and 15) and BgIII underlined,

lanes 2 and 4) to yield two DNA fragments encoding the S-peptide and the S(+5) protein. The two fragments were cloned separately into the BamHI site downstream of the pA9 promoter in plasmid p1415 to yield plasmids p4837 (S-peptide) and p4838 (S+5 protein). (ii) Primers RN-d (lane 4) and RN-b (lane 15) amplified the coding sequence of the S-protein. The PCR product was cloned as described in (i) to yield plasmid p4839 (S-protein).

- 10 lane 1: PCR primer (sense) RN-a
lane 2: Oligonucleotide RN-I and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-II
lane 3: Guide oligonucleotide RN-1 (antisense)
lane 4: PCR primer (sense) RN-d
15 lane 5: Oligonucleotide RN-II (continued from lane 2) and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-IIIN
lane 6: Guide oligonucleotide RN-2N (antisense)
lane 7: oligonucleotide RN-IIIN (continued from lane 5) and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-IV
20 lane 8: Guide oligonucleotide RN-3 (antisense)
lane 9: oligonucleotide RN-IV (continued from lane 7) and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-V
lane 10: Guide oligonucleotide Rn-4 (antisense)
lane 11: oligonucleotide RN-V (continued from lane 9) and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-VI
25 lane 12: Guide oligonucleotide RN-5 (antisense)
lane 13: oligonucleotide RN-VI (continued from lane 11) and alignment to oligonucleotide RN-VII
lane 14: Guide oligonucleotide Rn-6 (antisense)
30 lane 15: PCR primer (antisense) RN-b
lane 16: oligonucleotide RN-VII (continued from lane 13)

Symbols:

- (5'): non-phosphorylated 5' end
(5P): phosphorylated 5' end
(30H): conventional 3' end
5 (small letters): bases added for the convenience of cloning.

10 In Fig. 3B: The sequences encoding the S-peptide with the (Gly₄Ser)₃-linker peptide were constructed by first aligning sense oligonucleotides RN-I and RN-VIII (lanes 2 and 4) along the complementary guide oligonucleotide RN-7, and then selectively ligating the correctly aligned oligonucleotides using Taq-DNA-Ligase.

15 The ligation resulted in a continuous single DNA strand which was subsequently amplified by Vent DNA polymerase (25 PCR cycles) using the primer pair RN-a (lane 1) and RN-c (lane 5). This PCR reaction yielded the full length, double stranded ligation product. The PCR
20 product was gel purified, then cleaved with restriction enzymes BamHI (underlined, lane 1) and BglII (underlined, lane 5) and cloned into the BamHI site of p2027 to generate an NH₂-terminal protein fusion to GUS under the control of the pA9 promoter (p2027 was
25 constructed by cloning the GUS coding sequence of pBI101.3 as a BamHI/SmaI fragment into the BamHI site of p1415). This yielded plasmid p2028.

- lane 1: PCR primer (sense) RN-a
30 lane 2: Oligonucleotide RN-I encoding the S-peptide as in Figure 3a and the alignment to oligonucleotide RN-VIII encoding the (Gly₄-Ser)₃ linker peptide
lane 3: Guide oligonucleotide (antisense) RN-7

lane 4: Oligonucleotide RN-VIII (continued from lane 2)

lane 5: PCR primer (antisense) RN-c

5 Symbols:

(5'): non-phosphorylated 5' end

(5P): phosphorylated 5' end

(30H): conventional 3' end

(small letters): bases added for the convenience of
10 cloning

In Figure 4A: The protein and DNA sequence is shown for
S-peptide and the S-peptide with (Gly₄ Ser)₃ linker.
The S-peptide linker sequence was fused in frame to GUS
15 to yield plasmid p2028 as described for Figure 3B.

In Figure 4B: The ORF for (S+5)-protein and S-protein is
shown as contained in plasmids p4838 and p4839,
respectively. These plasmids were described above for
20 Figure 3A.

In Figure 4C:

(i) The mitochondrial protein targeting sequence (short
of the last four amino acids: Leu-Arg-Arg-Met) was
25 obtained by PCR with primers AOX3MI1 and AOX3MI2 from a
plasmid which contained the cDNA of Alternative Oxidase
(AOX3) of soybean as published by Finnegan and Day, 1997
(Plant Physiol. 114, pp455). Restriction sites (XbaI
and BglII at the 5' end and AflIII and BamHI at the 3'
30 end) were introduced during the thermocycling to yield
the PCR product which was cloned XbaI/BamHI downstream
of the A9 promoter in p1415. This plasmid was called
p0200.

(ii) Primers SPEPMI1 and SPEPMI2 were then used to produce from plasmid p4837 a PCR fragment encoding within and downstream of an AflIII restriction site the missing four amino acids (Leu-Arg-Arg-Met) of the mitochondrial targeting signal followed by the ORF of S-peptide. A PCR generated BamHI site at the 3' end allowed cloning of the PCR fragment as an AflIII/BamHI fragment into p0200. This cloning yielded plasmid p0203, containing the complete ORF of the translational fusion as shown.

(iii) The translational fusion of mitochondrial targeting sequence and ORF of S-peptide-GUS was generated in a similar fashion as described in (ii) except that PCR primers SPEPMI1 and SPEPMI2 were used on template p2028 to generate an AflIII/BamHI fragment that was cloned into p0200 to yield p0204.

(iv) The translational fusion of mitochondrial targeting sequence and ORF of S-protein was generated in a similar fashion as described in (ii and iii), except that PCR primers SPROTMI1 and SPROTMI2 were used on template p4838 to generate an AflIII/BamHI fragment that was cloned into p0200 to yield p0202.

(v) A PCR fragment was generated from template p4839 with primers SPROTF and SPROTR containing the ORF of S-protein in between BamHI restriction sites at either end. After digestion with BamHI this PCR fragment was cloned into the BamHI site of p3245 which yielded the translational fusion in p3249 of genomic ubiquitin DNA and S-protein as shown.

EXAMPLE 4

Use of the Dimer Protein Apetala3-Pistillata

5 Apetala3 (Ape3) and Pistillata (Pi) are two proteins of
Arabidopsis thaliana which are involved in the
regulation of floral differentiation. The genes are
known while the endogenous pattern of expression in the
tapetum is not known. Expression of the Arabidopsis
10 genes in the maize tapetum leads to disruption of the
normal anther development by activating normally silent
genes. These genes can also be used to activate, in the
maize tapetum, an Arabidopsis promoter responsive to the
Ap3-Pi dimer such as the Ap3 promoter (pAp3) itself.

15 We have built the following genes:

pA9-Apetala3

The cDNA for Ap3 (Jack et al, 1992, Cell 68, 683-697
GenBank Accession No. M86357) was cloned in the A9
20 expression cassette of pWP91 (WO-A-9211379) giving
plasmid p4796. This plasmid contains the Ap3 cDNA with
approximately 15 bases of 5' untranslated sequence
followed by the whole ORF (698 bases from ATG to TAA)
followed by approximately 120 bases of 3' untranslated
25 sequence, cloned in the BamHI site of pWP91.

pA9-Pistillata

The cDNA for Pi (Goto and Meyerowitz, 1994, Genes Dev.
8, 1548-1560 GenBank Accession No. D30807) was cloned in
30 the A9 expression cassette of pWP91 (WO-A-9211379)
giving plasmid p0180. This plasmid contains the Pi cDNA
with approximately 24 bases of 5' untranslated sequence
followed by the whole ORF (626 bases from ATG to TGA)
followed by approximately 250 bases of 3' untranslated

sequence, cloned in the XbaI-BamHI sites of pWP91.

pApetala3-PRGlucanase

5 The A9 promoter sequence in plasmid A9PR (described in
Worrall et al, 1992, The Plant Cell, 4, 759-771) was
replaced by a 1250 bp (approx) sequence containing the
Ap3 promoter region, obtained by PCR amplification of
10 *Arabidopsis thaliana* genomic DNA, according to the
published sequence (Jack et al, 1994 Cell, 76, 703-716),
giving plasmid p4817.

15 The genes were introduced in maize in various
combinations, by biolistic transformation techniques
known in the art. Plants were regenerated and assessed
for male fertility.

-p4796 (pA9-Ap3)/p0180 (pA9-Pi) cause male sterility.
Neither of them alone causes male sterility.

20 -p4796/p0180/p4817 (pAp3-PRGlucanase) cause sterility,
when p4817 with only one of the two transcription factor
genes does not.